FOUR MONTHS UNDER ARMS

A REMINISCENCE OF EVENTS PRIOR TO, AND DURING THE SECOND RIEL REBELLION

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British Columbia

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INDEX

Page 3 ..... Four Months Under Arms
Page 4 ..... Riel's Meeting
Page 5 ..... Eclipse of Sun Predicted
Page 6 ..... Convert Fort into Barracks
Page 7 ..... A Tactical Blunder
Page 8 ..... The Battle of Duck Lake
Page 9 ..... The Battle of Duck Lake
Page 10 ..... Police Commissioner Arrives
Page 11 ..... Prepare for Attack
Page 12 ..... Running the Blockade
Page 13 ..... Takes Steamer Through
Page 14 ..... Green Lake Trip
Page 15 ..... Indians Looting Post
Page 16 ..... The Battle of Batoche
Page 17 ..... Taking Prisoners to Regina
Page 18 ..... Jackson Gets Ducking
Page 19 ..... Sergeant Drills 'Em
Page 20 ..... Charge of No. 2 Company

I LEFT my native village of Hastings, Ontario, on the 30th day of April, 1884, enroute for Prince Albert, N.W. Territories.

Leaving the main line of the C.P.R. at a station called Troy we finished the remainder of our journey by horses and wagon across the prairie for seven days, and arrived at Prince Albert on the 20th day of May, 1884.

I soon learned that there was a strong feeling of discontent among the half-breeds or Metis, for while sitting on the grandstand watching the sports on the 24th of May, I overheard a man telling a group of listeners about a trip that he and two other men had made as delegates to Ottawa to bring certain claims of the settlers to the attention of the Government.

Petitions had been forwarded in previous years without results, so a delegation had been sent to Ottawa a couple of months previously to bring their claims more particularly to the attention of the Government, but they refused to meet the delegation or consider their claims in any way.

This refusal of the Government to meet the delegation, added to their discontent, and they took other means to secure what they felt was their just rights.

Following the putting down of the first Riel Rebellion in 1871, Louis Riel had been outlawed from Canada, and was living in Montana and as his term of outlawry had expired, a delegation was sent over, asking him to come and help them secure their rights. He finally consented to come, and arrived at Batoche in mid-summer, 1884, and from that time agitation was carried on with meetings held in all the French settlements and with the Indians.

DELEGATES TO OTTAWA AND RIEL

Many rumors were circulated, some from persons who were in a position to get reliable information. I worked for a contractor who was a very close friend of Canon Matheson, who was on the staff of Emanuel Anglican College, and they had several mission fields in the surrounding district, and were able to get reliable information. He told my employer that a very serious condition was developing.

These rumors naturally caused uneasiness among the residents in and around Prince Albert, as their claims were not generally understood by many of the townspeople, and a letter signed by some of the leading citizens was sent to Riel, asking him to arrange for a meeting in the town, and fully explain all their claims.

He readily agreed, and a meeting was arranged for in January, 1885, in Truscott's Hall. This was a long narrow building, with front entrance from River Street, and extended to Gore Street at the rear end, and a stage at that end, with an exit from it to Gore Street behind.

The day set for the meeting arrived, and Riel with a numerous retinue drove into town shortly after noon in their low wooden sleighs and parked them in Gore Street at the rear of the hall. Leaving a few men in charge the rest entered the hall from the rear and occupied the stage, while Riel and two of his party came down on the main floor and took seats in front of the stage and behind a long table.

A detail of four N.W.M.P. under command of Sergt. Stewart

were in attendance, and two placed at either end of the table as a precaution in the event of any trouble that might arise.

The hall was crowded to standing capacity, every man in town and many from the surrounding district being there. After a few opening remarks by the chairman, Mr. Andrew Spence, with the request that the speaker be given an attentive hearing, Riel was introduced to the audience. Riel was fully six feet tall, fair complexion and had a full redish beard. He spoke with a French accent, and was a fluent speaker.

He gave a very clear statement of their different claims. One of the terms of settlement of the first Riel Rebellion in 1871 was that any native of Manitoba who wanted to take up land for farming in what was then called the N. W. Territory, would be given a free grant to 160 acres wherever he located and any member of his family 18 years of age or over had the same right.

A large number of the French half-breeds located their grants along the South Saskatchewan River at Batoche, and following the plan of the French settlers in Quebec, they staked their claims so that all would have a water frontage. This plan made long, narrow holdings, the back lines were irregular, but it allowed for closer settlement.

In the late 1870's the Dominion Government sent parties out to survey all the prairie. The plan of survey was townships six miles square, divided into sections one mile square and quarter sections, and when these lines came in contact with the irregular back lines of the settler's farms, the surveyors would not adjust them, and in many cases that reduced the settler's holdings and in some cases eliminated them altogether. It was referred to Ottawa and the government upheld surveyors.

Riel explained all the different claims, and spoke for nearly two hours, and was warmly applauded when he finished and sat down. When the applause had stopped, an Englishman named R. J. Deacon, who had been in Winnipeg during the first Riel Rebellion, and had sat in the front row of seats at the meeting, turned his chair to the table, and from it stepped on to the table, and pointing his finger at Riel shouted, "Look at him, there is blood on his hands." Meaning the murder of Thos. Scott in 1871; the meeting was in an uproar at once.

Sergt. Stewart swept Deacon's feet from under him and he fell on his back on the table. While the police prevented any of the audience following Riel, who with his followers had scuttled out the rear door to their waiting sleighs, and quickly drove out of town. It was afterward learned that under the robes in each sleigh was one or more loaded rifles.

The people returned to their homes or places of business to discuss the affair, and anxiously await the turn of events that all were sure was bound to happen. The fact that it was 300 cold, wintry miles to the railway, and a large hostile force between, did not tend to lessen the anxiety each man felt for his family. After discussing the event with some of the prominent men in town, Lt.-Colonel Sproat sent a telegram to Ottawa, urging the Government to consider the claims of the settlers, but the warning was ignored.

Meetings continued to be held throughout the district, and it was a well authenticated rumor, that Riel had predicted to his followers, that if the sun was darkened on the 18th of March, that the claims of the half-breeds would succeed.

During the early days of March a friend and myself had been getting logs for a house we were going to build in the Spring, and were working about one and a half miles north of the river, and directly opposite Prince Albert. About 10 a.m. on the 18th of March a peculiar yellowish color appeared on the snow, and gradually grew quite dark, so we cashed our tools and started for town, and our path led through the village of the Sioux Indians.

This was a small area set aside for a number of the Sioux Indians who had fled to Canada after the Custer massacre, and some of the older ones would occasionally give very vivid descriptions of the atrocities they had committed on the white settlers in Minnesota.

One old hag called Sally, was describing one of these crimes in Russell & Davis' butcher shop telling how they had roasted the infants in one of the German settlements they had massacred in Minnesota. Their book-keeper, a man named Eaton, who had been a trooper in the 11th U. S. Cavalry, and had seen that particular atrocity, grasped a large cleaver lying on the meat block, and would have killed the old hag if others had not interferred.

A number of these Indians had gone to town to do washing and wood cutting for the residents, but as soon as the eclipse started they left for their village, and we met them on our way out and every Indian had a tomahawk in his hand, and looked so ugly, we gave them all the path.

Scott and Leason operated the mail and passenger stage between Prince Albert and a station called Troy on the main line of the C.P.R. and a stage left each terminus Monday morning, and arrived at the other end of the route on Saturday evening. There was five stations on the line, and a caretaker at each one.

Bob Ross was one of the drivers and his family lived in Prince Albert. He left there Monday, March 16th, and stopped at Batoche that night, and noticed the unrest among the crowd gathered there. When he met the incoming driver at Salt Plains station he warned him to be on the lookout, so after leaving Humbolt station Friday morning for Batoche, and about mid-forenoon he saw a band of horsemen coming, and still far away, he turned around and drove back to Humbolt, taking the caretaker with him, he drove with all speed and got safely away.

THE OUTBREAK

The eclipse of the sun occurred as Riel knew it would, and his followers got out of control almost immediately.

Walters and Baker had a general store at Prince Albert, and a branch store at Batoche, where they employed two clerks, and there was a telegraph office at the rear of the store. Shortly after the eclipse the crowd started to loot the store, and the operator saw what was going on, and got a despatch out to Regina before the wires were cut, thereby severing all communications with the outside world.

The operator and the two clerks, Joe D. Hanifin and Harold Ross, were made prisoners, and confined in a cellar.

Hilyard Mitchell operated a store at Duck Lake village, and he also owned a large farm about two and a half miles north of the village, and along the road to Fort Carlton. He was at his farm the night of the 18th and was told that the rebels intended to loot his store the next morning. So he went to Carlton and notified the police.

FORT CARLTON

During the winter of 1884 and 85 a force of carpenters from Prince Albert had been employed converting the buildings of the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Carlton into barracks to accommodate a troop of N.W.M.P. This work had been completed during February, 1885, and F troop of police, with the exception of a couple of small detachments at outlying points were stationed there under the command of Superintendent N. F. Crozier.

The usual high stockade of logs which surrounded all Hudson Bay posts was still intact, and inclosed approximately three acres, with bastions at each corner, and there was a small brass cannon in the N. E. bastion.

The post had been built on the south side of the North Saskatchewan river, at a point where the river took a wide bend to the north. It was possible to see a long distance both up and down the river. The bank of the river was low, and a flat extended back to a higher level bench. The lower flat was covered with a dense growth of small poplar and willow, while the higher bench was clear of all bush, and approximately 150 acres of level prairie. This flat extended south to the foot of a very steep and high hill, to the level prairie above, which was reached by a long side hill road. At the top of the hill the road branched. One road going south towards Duck Lake and the other easterly to Prince Albert.

CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS

Joe McKay, a native of Kildonan of Scotch parentage, and a resident of Prince Albert, had been employed as interpreter for the Mounted Police at Fort Carlton, was sent to Prince Albert, to enlist about 20 men as volunteers, and arrived there the 20th of March, at 12 p.m.

Our bachelor quarters were near the livery stable where Joe had left his horse, and knowing us well, he came over for a night's lodging, and when he explained his mission, Geo. Cockrill and I told him to put our names on his list.

On Friday, the 21st he secured 22 volunteers, and had them sworn in before Lt.-Col. Sproat. He hired five teams for transport the morning of the 22nd and we left for Fort Carlton, and reached there at midnight.

The most tragic event of this enlistment was that of Capt. Morton, who had driven in from his farm a few miles east of town to do his Saturday shopping. He enlisted, and his team was hired for transport. His family never saw him alive again, as he was killed at Duck Lake.

The Snider-Enfield rifles that were held in stock at Carlton were issued to the volunteers. We drilled twice a day in the barrack square and took our turn at guard duty.

Supplies at the Fort was not sufficient for the extra number of men and horses. Mr. Mitchell told the officer that there was a large supply of beef and oats at his farm, and at day break on the 26th of March, four police teams with a driver and one armed policeman in each sleigh, started for the farm, when they were met by a party of about 20 well armed horsemen, under command of Gabriel Dumont.

The horsemen opened files to each side of the road permitting the sleighs to pass through, then closed files, and Dumont gave the police the option of going back empty handed or fight. As the odds were too heavy, they returned to the Fort, and reported what had happened.

THE BATTLE OF DUCK LAKE

A Serious Tactical Blunder.

The assembly was sounded, and every man except the guards lined up in the barrack square, when the officer explained the situation and called for volunteers. Every one of the P. A. men stepped forward, and the Sergt.-Major selected 23 of us, which included five P. A. teamsters.

A ration of hardtack and cheese and 60 rounds of ball cartridge for our Snider-Enfield rifles was issued to each man, and we were assigned to ride with the teamsters who had brought us from Prince Albert.

The police had their own equipment, and the force numbered 96 men.

Lawrence Clarke, Chief Factor of the H.B. Co., and Thos McKay had come from P. A. the day before in their own light sleigh, and they also went out with the police officers, and the column started about 11 a.m. A six pounder gun, and crew, under command of Inspector Gagnon was taken. The wheels cut deep into the snow and the column had to wait several times for it to close up.

A mounted patrol of two Prince Albert volunteers, J. B. Mack and Alex Stewart were riding approximately 400 yards ahead of the column. The column had passed the place where the sleighs had been turned back in the morning, and also Beardy's reserve, and had seen nothing of the enemy.

The first sleighs had just gone down a slight slope in the road, and were starting up the long slope ahead, when the patrol who had reached the top signalled to stop, and raced back and reported a large number of rebels coming out of the village of Duck Lake, about one and a half miles away.

Had Major Crozier rushed his forces to the top of the hill he would have dominated the level prairie below over which the rebels were coming, the outcome of the battle might have been much different, but he halted the column in the depression, and immediately began to station his forces, which was a fatal mistake.

About 70 yards to the east of the road was a small slough or pond, with dense growth of willow and poplar all about it. Orders

were given for the first sleighs to pull out to the left as far as this pond and the rest to follow, and draw up in echlon formation, thus forming a long barricade for the police to take position behind it. The horses were unhitched and driven to the shelter of the dense growth around the pond. The six pounder was drawn up to the front, and just off to the left side of the road, and loaded ready for action.

To the right and front was a cleared field of approximately 10 acres, with a rail fence along the north, east and south sides, and on the west side was a large slough or small lake.

To the right and rear was a thick growth of small poplar with some large trees standing among it, and between the north fence and this bluff, was a well beaten path leading up to a small log house, set well back from the fence, with a small window in the east side facing the road.

The fence on the east side of the field paralleled the road nearly to the top of the hill, then west to the slough or lake. Along the south fence there was a number of fair sized poplar trees standing. The ridge of the hill extended to the east from the road, in a crescent shape, around and abreast of the dense poplar and willow growth, behind which the police horses were sheltered. A trail branched from the road at the top of the hill, and through a gap in the fence crossed the field to the log house.

The volunteers were under command of Capt. Moore, retired from the Canadian Militia. He gave orders for a number of us to extend to the right along the north fence, while two groups of three men in each group went into the poplar bluff and worked towards the house.

While this was being done, the rebels had reached the top of the hill in front, some moving along the top of the crescent shaped ridge to their right, and others to their left, along the south fence, while a large group was standing along the road.

A horseman left the group, and rode down the trail that crossed the field towards the house, and he was followed by a man on foot some distance behind. The horseman was ordered to stop by Charlie Hamilton, when he got near the house, and replied. "You go to hell, this is my house," and as we had strict orders not to fire first, he came right along and went in. There was another man in the house. Another horseman left the group at the top of the hill, and came down the road waving a white rag, and Supt. Crozier and Joe McKay went to meet him and parley.

He dismounted when they met, and they talked only a short time when he made a grab for Joe's revolver, and at the same time made a slash at him with a long knife, but Joe stepped aside and shot the fellow in the leg. Crozier and Joe walked back to the sleighs amid a hail of bullets.

As they reached the sleighs a shot was fired from the six-pounder at the group on the road at the top of the hill, and every rebel disappeared almost at once, by dropping flat on the snow. After that a rebel head would rise above the snow, just long enough to aim and fire and drop again.

The cannon was not fired again, as in reloading the shell was put in before the powder and could not be extracted.

I was between Middleton and McKenzie on the extended line along the fence, and we fired at the man who had crawled under the fence, then on the man who was following the horseman across the field, and had dug a rifle pit in a snowdrift till he quit. Then seeing what we thought was Indians standing among the trees along the south fence we concentrated our fire on them, but soon found out that it was blankets wound around the trees, while the rebels were lying behind trees, but we silenced some of them.

Charlie Newitt was wounded in the knee and was unable to come back. Alex Fisher was next in line and he was wounded in the leg, and came along the path behind us going to the sleighs. He had only gone a few yards when he was shot in the head by the man in the house. Then Jas. Bakey came along, wounded in the arm, and just passed us when he cried out, "God have mercy on my soul," and fell dead. Next to fall was Middleton on my right, then McKenzie, on my left, then McPhail and Jas. Anderson, all shot in the back. A large tree standing directly between me and the window is how I escaped the same fate.

One of the groups of three men who had gone into the poplar bluff, Capt. Moore, Capt. Morton and Mr. Napier, came into direct line of fire from the rebels in the house, and Capt. Morton and Mr. Napier were killed and Capt. Moore severely wounded.

The other group of three, Hamilton, W. Haslam and Graham Neilson had worked around behind the house and shot one of the rebels and wounded the other. This group carried Capt. Moore to the sleighs. S. Elliot was killed when helping A. Markley into a sleigh.

I heard the bugler sound the "Retreat" and ran to the road, and when I reached it, there was only three sleighs left, and Wm. Drain's was the last in line. He was having difficulty with his black horse, "Antoine," who was a fiend to kick. Under directions from Drain, who was controlling him from the seat, I managed to get him hitched, and stepped back when a bullet passed my head with a whine and burried itself in "Antoine's" flank. I ducked, Sergt.-Major Dann, a veteran of Zulu War, saw me and said. "No use ducking lad, it was past before you heard it."

Sergt. Montgomery and Constable Gilchrist were covering the retreat. Standing behind the gun carriage, they were firing at every head that showed up above the ridge to the east. When all was ready to go, Sergt.-Major Dann called them to come, and as they were passing Drain's sleigh, Constable Gilchrist fell, shot through both thighs. I helped put him in Drain's sleigh and we started at once. The rebel fire had slackened, and when we got to the top of the short slope, they stood up and watched us go. Dann, Montgomery, Gilchrist, Thos. McKay and myself were in Drain's sleigh. The rebels had ceased fire, and were standing in groups. McKay was just in the act of firing at one of the groups when Dann saw him, and snatched his rifle from him and said, "You d—— fool, do you want to draw their fire again."

Nine dead volunteers were left where they had fallen, and the wounded man, Newitt. Charlie had clerked in a general store in Prince Albert, which did a large trade with the half-breeds. An Indian was trying to kill Charlie with the butt of his gun, when a half-breed who knew Charlie stopped him, but he had broken most of Charlie's fingers trying to shield his face from the blows.

One policeman had been killed, J. T. Gibson. Arnold and Garrett were very severely wounded. Inspector Gagnon shot in the foot; Const. Manner Smith shot through the left lung; Corpl's Gordon and McPherson slightly wounded, and all were taken to Carlton. Dr. Miller extracted the bullet from Smith's lung, but both Arnold and Garrett died during the night, and the three policemen were buried the next day, east of the Fort.

A mounted patrol of three was sent out on the Carlton to Duck Lake road, with orders to ride as far as they thought safe, and a strong guard was placed for the night. I was on the last watch, and just at dawn two of the patrol crossed my beat, and asked if the other had come in, and I said he had not.

About an hour later he rode in, and I learned that his name was J. Street. He had gone as far as the battlefield, and said that the dead bodies must have been picked up, they were not lying where they had fallen, and this proved to be correct.

When Col. Irvine, Commissioner of Mounted Police, received the telegram from Batoche that the rebels were looting, he started from Regina with a small detachment of police, and Hayter Reid, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs went with him. He made a detour to the east from Humbolt stage station, crossing the South Saskatchewan at McKenzie's, on the ice, came into Prince Albert, where he enlisted some more volunteers, and reached Fort Carlton at midnight on the 27th, and then learned of the battle of Duck Lake.

POLICE RETIRE TO PRINCE ALBERT

Hon. Lawrence Clarke, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Prince Albert, was still at Carlton, and a conference was held in the morning of the 28th, and it was decided to retire to Prince Albert, and they started making preparations at once. Every available means of transport was secured, and some of the nearby farmers supplied teams, and went with their families to Prince Albert.

Every sleigh was loaded to the extreme limit with supplies, and what could not be taken was saturated with coal oil to make it useless to the rebels. As soon as each sleigh was loaded it left the Fort and went up the long, steep side hill to the level prairie above, to await there till all the sleighs had reached the top. A strong mounted patrol was sent out on the road to Duck Lake with orders to hold back any attempt the rebels might make to attack the Fort. Another strong patrol had been sent ahead to the junction of the Carlton road with the main road from Batoche to Prince Albert to guard against any attempt that might be made to attack the column there.

Just as the last sleighs passed out of the Fort, a lamp was upset in the sergeant's quarters, either accidently or by intent. We climbed the long, steep hill to the level prairie above, and men

on both sides of the overloaded sleighs were pulling on ropes to help the horses up the hill, all working feverishly. The glare from the burning buildings on the dark wintry sky could be seen for miles, and was a signal that the police would have to evacuate the Fort. The sleighs gathered at the top had started away as soon as the fire was seen and the last three sleighs with the mounted patrol following about a mile in the rear, as a guard against a possible attack by the rebels from Duck Lake.

We reached Prince Albert at about 4 p.m. on Sunday, the 29th of March, and found that Lt.-Col. Sproat had organized every man in town in fatigue parties and had built a stockade of cordwood six feet high around the Presbyterian Church property, which comprised a brick church and brick manse, and word had been sent to every family in town, that in the event of an attack being made, the church bell would be tolled, and every one come at once. Guards and patrols for the night was chosen and the rest of us to find billets where we could.

A one-man mounted patrol was sent out on the road to Batoche, with instructions to go as far as the ridge, about six miles, and report back if any rebels were seen coming.

"RIEL'S MESSENGER AND THE ALARM"

Thos. Sanderson, engaged in hauling freight from the C.P.R. station at Troy to the merchants at Prince Albert was on his way in, and met the stage driver at Humbolt station, who told him what was going on at Batoche. Sanderson had no quarrel with any of the half-breeds, he came right along. His load of goods was confiscated and he was made prisoner.

Riel was aware that the police had gone to Prince Albert and decided to send Sanderson with a message, that if they sent two sleighs, they could have the dead bodies and the wounded man, Newitt, but they must not carry arms. Sanderson was given a horse and escort of three mounted men to ride with him as far as was safe. They met this patrol about five miles from Prince Albert, who immediately turned around and raced away. Sanderson was relieved of his horse and escort and had to walk to Prince Albert, reaching there about midnight, and delivered his message.

The one-man patrol to the ridge rode into town in a panic, and reported that a band of rebel horsemen were coming. The bell was tolled, and the townspeople made a mad rush for the stockade.

Just north of the manse, and on a slightly lower flat, was an open air skating rink with a high board fence around it, and orders were given to knock down the side facing the manse. To many of the panic-stricken women making their way to the manse with their children, the noise of knocking the boards off, sounded like rifle shots, and two mothers fainted and had to be carried in. Sanderson's arrival a couple of hours later was a great relief to many, when they learned what the message was. Wm. Drain volunteered to go, and Sanderson was sure that his team would be returned to him, so only one team was sent. Eastwood Jackson, the druggist, accompanied them to render aid to Newitt, for the trip, but was made prisoner.

The rebels gave Sanderson his team and freedom, and they returned late on Tuesday night, the last of March, with the nine dead bodies, and the wounded man, Newitt. It was then seen that all the men along the fence had been shot in the back, by the rebels from the house.

The nine dead were given a military funeral on the 4th of April, and all buried in one large grave in St. Alban's church yard, west of the town, and not far from Emanuel Anglican College.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

The North-West Transportation Company was a subsidiary of the Hudson Bay Company, and operated four stern wheel steamers on the Saskatchewan river, making regular trips from Grand Rapids, where the Saskatchewan river empties into Lake Winnipeg to the head of navigation, with supplies for the Hudson's Bay Company northern posts, and bringing out the fur catch.

These boats could not be operated till the ice had run out of Cedar Lake on the lower river, which was about the middle of May, and as the C.P.R. track would be laid to Medicine Hat on the South Saskatchewan river, during the winter, it was decided to send the smallest of these boats, the Northcote, up to the Hat in the fall of 1884, haul her out on the ways, and await the run out of the ice in the spring.

The largest steamer, the Marquis, and the Manitoba were berthed in the mouth of Shell river, which flows into the North Saskatchewan, about three miles above Prince Albert. The steamer, Northwest was hauled out on the ways at the ship yard for repairs, and Captain Sheets took the Northcote up to the Hat and hauled her out on the ways, to await the run out of the ice in the spring, then went to Winnipeg for the winter.

The stock of provisions in Prince Albert was getting very low, and Chief Factor, Lawrence Clarke, decided to send a message to Capt. Sheets to launch the Northcote, load her with supplies and come as quickly as possible.

The ice had run out of the South branch on the 30th of March. Wm. Drain volunteered to take the message. He left Prince Albert on the second of April, crossed the South branch in a row boat, his horse swimming behind, then rode 110 miles across open prairie, well east of Batoche and got to the stage road at Salt Plains, and sent the telegram from the first station to Capt. Sheets.

There was two cable ferry crossings on the South branch. One at Batoche, and the other at Clark's Crossing, and when he brought the boat up the fall before these cables had been lowered to the river bed. He was well aware of conditions at Batoche, but decided he would go ahead as planned, but took what precaution he thought was necessary. He knew they would be fired at from both sides of the river at Batoche. The windows were taken out of the pilot house, and it was covered with four inch oak plank. A space between the planks on the front so that the pilot sitting on the floor could see out, and the planking on the sides projected past the front so that a bullet would not come

in the space. The sides were planked up seven feet high and a space left, and hats hung in the space for the rebels to shoot at.

Sand bags were piled around both engine room and boilers, and when all supplies were aboard he started down the river. He had as a co-pilot a man named Ed. Hate, who had been a member of the Nile expedition for the relief of General Gordon at Kartoum. The ferry cable at Clark's Crossing was down on the river bottom, but he did not expect any such luck at Batoche, and when he came around the point he saw the cable had been lowered to about three feet above the water. He rang the engine room for full speed ahead, thinking that the impact might loosen either end of the cable from its moorings, but it held firm, and the steamer began to swing broadside in the current. He rang for full speed astern, and the steamer gradually backed off, and he kept on up the river till well out of range, then turned and went farther up to a safe landing. He thought of a plan to overcome the difficulty, and after consulting the engineer and crew, he decided to put it into effect.

His plan was, that he would take the steamer to the middle of the river, let her drift down stern first with the current, and keep the wheel turning ahead, just enough to keep her straight, and headed up stream, and she would drift on to the cable, the wheel turning ahead, would pick up the cable and drop it on the cables on the top of the high posts, and it would slide ahead and over the bow. It had not occurred to him that the smoke stack was higher than the cables, and as it slid along, the ferry cable pulled the top of the smoke stack down on the top of the pilot house, and it acted as a skid to carry the cable over, otherwise it would have taken the top off the pilot house, and exposed the pilots to the rifle fire from both banks.

He called the engine room for full speed astern, and when well out of range turned around and went some miles down river, then stopped and made temporary repairs to the smoke stack, and finally arrived at Prince Albert about the 15th of April.

He was commodore of the fleet of four steamers, and was Captain of the steamer, Marquis. He and the pilot had sat on the floor at either side of the wheel during the critical time till they got out of range.

Capt. Sheets was an old Mississippi river captain. I heard their description of the affair, and the Captain's river vocabulary was vivid.

There was no mistake about the intensity of the fire from the rebels on both sides of the river, for I personally counted 67 bullet holes in the oak planking on the pilot house, and the sandbags were riddled.

It was known in Prince Albert, that the 90th Battalion from Winnipeg with two batteries of artillery under command of General Middleton, was making forced marches across the plains from Regina to Batoche, and that the rebels would soon be on the defensive, and no possibility of an attack on Prince Albert, and affairs assumed almost a normal condition.

Farmers returned to their homes, and started putting in their crops.

The steamer, Northwest, had been hauled up on the ways after navigation stopped in the fall of 1884 for repairs.

The Marquis was brought down to the shipyards at Goshen, a mile east of Prince Albert and both steamers were being refitted to transport troops, and the Northcote was repaired ready for transport on the South branch, as General Middleton's force was nearing Batoche.

THE GREEN LAKE TRIP

On the 25th of April, Angus McKay, a brother of the late Judge James McKay of Regina, came in to Prince Albert to report on conditions at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Green Lake, where he was employed as clerk.

Hon. Lawrence Clarke, Chief Factor of the district decided to move the large supply of trade goods that were stored at the depot at the south end of the lake, to the trading posts farther north, and approached the Supt. of police for permission to engage some carpenters and helpers to go to Green Lake and biuld bateaux to move the goods. He received permission and engaged six carpenters and four helpers, and we signed on at $100 per month.

We were told to be at the boat landing early on the 29th, and that there was enough arms and ammunition at the depot to arm every man, but there was a chance of trouble before we reached the depot. and five of the party brought the Snider-Enfields and ammunition, that had been issued to them as volunteer guards.

Just before we went aboard the steamer to be ferried across, three Mounted Police came down and took the Snider-Enfields away, and we were left with only three rifles. Two of the men had Snider Carbines, and I had a Remington.

We were transported across the river on steamer, Northwest, and our outfit was a team of heavy horses and wagon, a team of light horses and wagon. Chas. Garson, Chief Clerk at Prince Albert was in charge and he and McKay had their own saddle horses.

We reached the bank of the Big Grass river, which flows north, on the afternoon of the third day, and followed along it for several miles to where it took a sharp turn to the west across the valley and a sharp turn north again, and the crossing was just below the turn on the far side of the valley. The river was more like a canal, and about 60 feet wide, and running full with the spring flow. At the first turn it had overflowed its banks and formed a deep slough, but a submerged corduroy bridge enabled the teams to cross. There was a trapper there with a canoe, and he ferried the men across.

We reached Green Lake depot on the 5th of May, and found that the man who had been left in charge, had taken fright and gone, but he left a note to say that he had taken the triggers off the guns and hidden them, and had sunk the ammunition in the lake. That left us with only three rifles and a limited amount of ammunition.

The Hudson's Bay men decided that we should build a stockade around the depot and we started the next morning digging a

trench. Logs were cut in the nearby woods and hauled in as soon as cut and stood on end in the deep trench, and by night of 7th of May it was almost complete.

Morning of the 6th, Angus McKay and two others had started for the post about 25 miles north, and taken the two light horses to ride, and they reached the post at dark, and found that the Indians were looting it.

They were made prisoners and placed in one of two cabins that stood close together. They were securely bound, but no guards were placed as every Indian wanted to get his share of the loot. A French half-breed who Angus had befriended, lived in the other cabin, and during the day he dug a hole through from his cellar to the one where the captives were. As soon as it got dark they started for the depot, and reached there about 10 o'clock the forenoon of the 8th.

We left Green Lake depot in the late afternoon of the 8th, and marched till dark and camped. Garson riding a couple of miles in the rear came in after dark and reported no one following. We placed guards around the camp and tethered Garson's horse and figured we were all safe. There was a heavy hoar frost during the night, and the next morning an old Hudson Bay man showed us where two Indians had circled the camp, their footprints were clear on the frosted grass.

We got back to the Big Grass river crossing on the afternoon of the 11th. No canoe this time. I was a strong swimmer in my young days, and was the youngest of the party, and tied a light rope about my shoulders and swam across. The rope was longer than twice the width of the river. I stood close to the bank, and they tied a breeches buoy in the rope, and I would run back pulling across one man at a time till several had crossed. Then we fastened a rope to the end of the tongue, and another to the rear, and lashed the box and bedding securely, then pulling on the rope the teamster made the approach safely.

We reached the north bank of the Saskatchewan river on the afternoon of the 15th of May, and were ferried across by the steamer Northwest. We were all taken up to the Hudson's Bay Company store, and our bed rolls searched and some valuable furs were found in one of the helper's bed roll. He lost his pay and was threatened with a trial for theft.

It had been reported in Prince Albert that the entire party had been killed, and it was a great relief to the folks we were back safely. It was then we learned that Middleton's forces had captured Batoche.

BATTLES OF FISH CREEK AND BATOCHE

Middleton's first contact with the rebels was at Fish Creek. The rebels had dug a line of rifle pits along the top of the steep bank of the creek, about half a mile on each side of the bridge, and camouflaged them with brush, and then destroyed the bridge across the creek, the troops had to advance across open level prairie to the attack. The rebels held this for two days and retired to Batoche, where they had built a long barricade of sod six feet high.

When the troops attacked Batoche, the women and children were taken across the river on the cable ferry at night. Riel also crossed the river, and was making his way to the Catholic Mission house at St. Laurent, when he was captured by three volunteer scouts from Prince Albert—Thos. Horrie, Robert Armstrong and Wm. Deihl. He was turned over to General Middleton, who sent him to Regina at once.

The artillery soon destroyed the sod barricade, and the rebels fought a rearguard action from house to house, and when they saw they could not hold back the attack, most of them crossed the river on the cable ferry at night, then loosed it from its moorings at both ends and the ferry drifted down the river several miles before it was caught and moored at the bank.

Lack of ammunition and no source of supply was one of the factors that forced the rear guard of 34 rebels to surrender on the 12th of May. The others had crossed the river and dispersed to different camps farther north. The men who had been imprisoned since the 18th of March were released.

The steamer, Northcote, had been repaired and went down to the forks of the river, and then up the South river, salvaged the ferry and towed it up to Batoche, where it was used to transport the troops across the river, and then went on up the river to Clark's Crossing to transport the Queen's Own Rifles across, who were marching to Battleford, under command of General Strange.

MIDDLETON'S TROOPS ENTRY TO PRINCE ALBERT

A campsite had been prepared west of the town, and at noon on the 20th of May the troops marched in. They were led by the pipe band of the 90th Winnipeg Battalion. Then General Middleton (riding a beautiful white stallion which he had confiscated from a Frenchman named De Chambeau) and his staff, the 90th Battalion, Colonel Boulton's Scouts and two batteries of artillery.

The Prince Albert brass band had gone out to the camp site to welcome the troops in. It was as good as any band west of Winnipeg. When the 90th had finished, we played a couple of our best and when the first papers reached town two weeks later, the Winnipeg Telegram had an account of the entry, written by their correspondent, a man named Ham.

He described it thus: The band of the 90th played, the Prince Albert asses brayed, and all was hilarity. It was well for him, that he had gone up the river to Battleford with the troops, for our E and B flat Basso's, both big men, would have devilled his hams for him.

A few days after the troops came in, a very pleasing ceremony took place at General Middleton's headquarters, when he presented Chief Mistawassis of the Sturgeon Lake reserve with a medallion of Queen Victoria, for remaining loyal.

This medallion is cherished by his decendents who have always been loyal subjects. Some of them fought in the first Great War. The Chief was also shown how the Gatling gun was operated and he was very much impressed with the speed of firing the shells. A few days after the troops went to Battleford by steamers and Col. Boulton's scouts by trail along the south side of North Saskatchewan River.

Orders were received by the police to bring the prisoners to Regina, and eight local teams were secured for transport. The volunteers were still liable to be called for service, and two guards for each wagon was called.

Honore Jackson was one of the prisoners. He had joined the rebels shortly after Riel came over, and was said to be secretary to Riel. He had no grievance or claims for adjustment such as the rebels had, and was well aware of the position he was in. He had not shaved or cut his hair for a long time, and was a wierd looking creature, and was playing the role of a lunatic.

George Cockrill and I had been alloted to Wm. McBeath's wagon in which there was three Indians and Jackson, and he was shackled by the foot to a Sioux Indian called One Arrow.

A strong escort of N.W.M. Police under command of Inspector G. E. Sanders accompanied us and we left Prince Albert on June 20th, crossed the South Saskatchewan at McKenzie's and camped for the night. Next day we followed west along the south bank of the river to Batoche, where a stop was made to give relatives of the prisoners a chance to bid them farewell. Then went 20 miles farther and camped.

Tents were pitched and beds made for the prisoners, but Jackson would not keep still, so we unshackled him, spread-eagled his limbs and staked him down with tent pegs, and threw a blanket over him. He kept quiet.

HAD ARGUMENT WITH JACKSON

Next day was very warm and after being on guard the night before I was sleepy, and with my rifle standing between my knees with the butt resting on the floor I dozed off. Jackson sat directly in front of me and I felt a touch on my rifle, and took a stronger grip on it, waited. Soon Jackson grasped it with both hands and tried to wrench it from me, but I broke his grip and said that if he touched it again that I would shoot him. He replied. I wish to God you would. We told him that he was going to be hanged when we got to Regina, which did not ease his mind.

Next day we reached Humbolt in mid-afternoon. The Midland Battalion was there. They had been recruited mainly from the counties of Huron and Bruce. Jackson was born and brought up in the town of Wroxter and many of them knew him. They lined up on both sides of the road and pointed him out to the others, and Jackson was getting alarmed.

The surgeon of the battalion had been a professor in a Toronto college and Jackson had been one of his pupils for a couple of terms. He asked permission to interview Jackson, so Geo. and I unshackled him and took him over. The surgeon was a very tall man, and was wearing a cork helmet. Jackson was a short man, and the surgeon sat on a camp chair so that he could study Jackson's expression better when asking him questions. As the surgeon asked him questions, he feigned hard of hearing, and moved up close. When he stopped asking questions, Jackson spread his arms apart and said. "These wide plains will again be covered with buffalo," then bringing his hands together, brought them down on the cork helmet, and pushed it down on the officer's ears. Geo. and I did not anticipate any such action,

as he done it so quickly. We grabbed him by legs and arms, and gave him a couple of Dutch whirls, and carried him over to the wagon, and shackled him close to the floor. He was biting and clawing like a mad dog.

On the 24th we camped between two lakes on the Salt Plains.

Jackson was getting so filthy it was unbearable. We reported it to the officer, and he told us to give him a bath. We unshackled him and took him into the water, stripped him naked and started to scrub him with a horse brush. He broke loose and waded out till the water was up to his chin, then he would make the most diabolical faces, and duck under. He did this several times, then stayed under longer than usual, and the officer thought that he might loose a prisoner by drowning. He sent a couple of mounted men in on the other side, and Jackson came out towards us, ducked to one side and under the wagon, and away across the prairie like a hare, and being naked could outdistance any of us, but was finally run down by a mounted man.

On the 27th we passed through Quappelle Valley shortly after reveille had sounded, reached Regina that night and delivered all the prisoners. Next day they were all lined up and photographed. They were all given prison terms of different lengths. Riel was tried for treason and convicted and was hanged on the 16th of November.

Jackson was not put on trial as he was judged to be insane and he was sent to an asylum near Winnipeg, and when he knew that he had escaped the just penalty for his actions, he soon regained his sanity, and was made a servant to the Chaplin of the institution. One Sunday when the Chaplin was holding services, he stole the housekeeper's dress and walked out for an evening stroll and was not missed till the next morning. He made his way across the United State's border and the next that was heard of him he had joined Cox's army marching to Washington.

We were given five days leave to see the sights of the new city and rest the horses for the return trip. The third night we camped close to a slough with a poplar bluff around it. The horses were picketed and only one was hobbled. After dark the coyotes started to howl close to camp, and all the horses except the one that was hobbled broke loose and went back about 15 miles before they were caught. We had a difficult time crossing the South Saskatchewan river as the cable was broken, and it took us a full day to make the crossing.

We reached Prince Albert on the 14th of July, and turned in our rifles, and we were discharged, after nearly four months active service.

CHARGE OF NO. 2 COMPANY OF PRINCE ALBERT VOLUNTEERS

An Incident During the Rebellion

When the police retired to Prince Albert, they brought all the Snider-Enfield rifles and ammunition with them, and two companies of volunteers were organized. Their duty was to provide guards for a picket line around the town which was about one and a half miles long.

No. 2 Company under command of Capt. Hoey, retired from the Canadian Militia. He was lame, so we were drilled by the sergeant. East of our barracks and on a higher level was a vacant area of about one and a half acres, on the east side was a brick house with a garden and rail fence around it.

Our barracks was on the north side of the street. The property on the south side was fenced right up to the west side of this vacant area which was used for our drill ground. A narrow path close to the fence led up to it. The sergeant would lead us up in single file twice a day for drill.

One afternoon the D.M. of I.A. who had come in with Col. Irvine with the reinforcements from Regina, and a police officer were going past, stopped to watch our manouvers. We did not know whether it was pity, or a large ego which prompted him to go to Capt. Hoey and ask permission to drill us for a week, when he said we would then beat No. 1 Company hands down. He got permission.

He took the afternoon drill. The first two days we drilled with side arms only. A short sword bayonet. The third day we were to bring both rifles and side arms. He had drilled us in column of fours and line formation. He lined us up and gave instruction when in line formation. He did not march with us, but stood near the end of the path at the top of the hill.

When on quick march carry our rifles at the shoulder. Double up. Carry them at the trail. Charge. Grasp our rifles at the breech in our right hand and well along the barrel in our left and carry them breast high.

The drill ground was about 90 yards across. He gave these orders. Shon! Fix bayonets! Shoulder arms! Right about! Quick march! Near the fence he called halt! Right about! Quick march 20 paces! Double up 20 paces! Charge 20 paces then halt! We did this several times, then he formed us up in column of fours, and marched us around the drill ground. We were marching east, when something took his attention, and when he looked again, the front four were climbing over the fence. This was done to ridicule him.

He put us in formation again and marched us around that drill ground till we were on the point of mutiny. Before dismissal he praised us for our improvement in drill and made the remark that when making a charge a yell sometimes disconcerted the enemy, and also suggested that it would improve our appearance if we shaved each morning. One man named William Baer, who followed trapping for a living, and did not shave or cut his hair from September till following May, took these remarks pointed at him.

Some of us told Capt. Hoey that we would not go on drill again. There was a strategist in our company, an old British soldier, and he put forward a plan to which we agreed, after he had assured us that we could not be court martialed, as the blighter had no military standing. Baer was to fall in at the centre of the line, thus he would be directly in front of the D.M. of I.A. We were on the drill ground next day when he arrived, with sword and scabbard at his side, which gave him a real military pose, lacking the previous days when he only had a baton.

GIVES FINAL ORDERS

This was to be the last day, and he lined us up for final manouvers and gave his orders. Shon! By the right dress! Fix bayonets! Shoulder arms! Right about! Quick march! A smile spread all along the line, but was dropped when we got near the fence, and ordered right about, quick march, 20 paces! Double up, 20 paces! Charge 20 paces! We grasped our rifles as instructed and every man started to yell like fiends. At 20 paces he called halt! We did not halt. Baer was directly in front of him and looked like a typical Afghan, and all of us racing forward. He drew his sword, raised it above his head, and yelled. Come on boys, and ran down the path as fast as he could go. When he saw there was no pursuit he slowed to a brisk military walk, and no doubt raconted at the officer's mess that evening how he had led the charge of No. 2 Company of Prince Albert volunteers.

We would have followed him to hell or Batoche, but were jammed at the end of a one man trail, and convulsed with laughter. We all agreed at mess that night, that he showed a high degree of military genius, when he could so quickly adapt himself to unforeseen circumstances.

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